



January 14, 2016

Hilda L. Solis, Chair, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
Supervisor, First District
500 West Temple Street, Room 856
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Via email to FirstDistrict@bos.lacounty.gov and EPR@LACOUNTY.GOV

SUBJECT: Support for Los Angeles County Pharmaceuticals and Sharps EPR Ordinance

Dear Board Chair Solis:

On behalf of the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE) and Teamsters Local 396, we are writing to express support for creating a county-wide stewardship program for the safe and convenient disposal of unwanted medicines and medical supplies, such as syringes, from households. This program is crucial to protect the health and safety of our environment, sanitation workers, and our communities. As part of the Don't Waste LA Coalition, LAANE and Teamsters Local 396 work alongside community, environmental, and faith organizations to increase recycling and composting while cleaning up a historically dirty and dangerous industry.

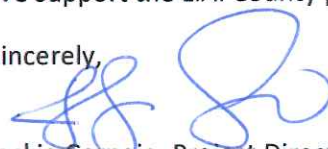
When needles from syringes aren't handled properly, putting our families and sanitation workers at risk of dangerous needle sticks and infections. For one recent example of the risks faced by sanitation workers, workers at a L.A. County-area Materials Recovery Facility recently removed around 5,000 needles that came in one commercial recycling load. While that day, thankfully, no workers were stuck, this is an all too common occurrence. At this same area facility, needles are estimated to be found in the load 2-3 days a week. When workers are stuck, they risk exposure to dangerous diseases like Hepatitis or even AIDS. Workers in this industry need, and deserve, safer working conditions.

We appreciate L.A. County's sheriff collection sites for medicines and syringes, but we need a more convenient solution. Also, law enforcement should not be required to bear the burden for managing a health care industry product – the hospitals, doctors, pharmacies and drug companies should all share in the cost and responsibility to ensure safe management of these products.

It's time to ensure that all communities in our county have safe and convenient take-back locations for pharmaceuticals and sharps. It just makes sense to have the manufacturers of the medicines and sharps provide a stewardship program for their products, just like they already do in other countries.

We support the L.A. County proposed ordinance, and ask the Board of Supervisors to pass it.

Sincerely,


Jackie Cornejo, Project Director
Don't Waste LA, LAANE


Ron Herrera, Secretary-Treasurer
Teamsters Local Union No. 396